



## Finding and Repairing Leaks in Roofs

### Causes of Leaks



- Defective flashing. Wet spots near a chimney or outside wall may mean the leak is caused by defective flashing, narrow flashing or loose mortar joints. On sloping roof valleys and at junctions of dormers and roof, look for corroded, loose or displaced flashing. Defective flashing often occurs around dormers and plumbing vent pipes.
- Clogged downspouts or eaves. On flat roofs check for choked downspouts. Accumulated water on the roof above the flashing may cause a leak.
- Cracks and deterioration. Roofing (especially wood or composition shingles) usually deteriorates first on southern exposures. Check southern slopes for cracking or deterioration.
- Holes. Wet spots on plain roofs are usually caused by missing shingles or holes in the roofing. To find holes, look for light coming through places in unsealed attics. Stick a straw through the hole to mark the spot on the outside.

### Repairing Leaks

Methods of repair will depend on the kind of roofing and the nature and extent of the leak.

### Missing Shingles

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*Document DH-057,*  
*IFAS Disaster Handbook for*  
*Extension Agents* (developed  
by the Cooperative Extension  
Service for the benefit of  
Florida's citizens)

- Replace missing shingles with similar shingles or pieces of rust-resistant metal (In an emergency use metal cut from a tin can.).
- Paint the metal on both sides and slip it under the upper layer of shingles. Be careful not to dislodge or loosen sound shingles.
- Cut out old nails with a long thin cold chisel.
- Cover exposed nails with roofer's cement.

## Holes

- Patch small holes with metal screws. Use neoprene washers in low places.
- Repair large holes by replacing metal sheets or patching with a heavy cloth or canvas and elastic roofer's cement.
- Apply cement carefully over the patch to prevent canvas from sagging into the hole.

## Cracks

- Brush on two coats of roof coating.
- Place heavy cloth or light canvas over the cracked area, extending the cloth approximately 6 inches beyond the cracked area.
- Use a roofing brush to smooth out cloth, and brush on two thin coats of roof coating. Keep cloth smooth while brushing.

CAUTION: Do not walk on patched section.